

**REMARKS**

The allowance of claim 20 and indication of allowable subject matter in claims 2-6, 10, 11 and 16-19 are acknowledged with appreciation. By this amendment claims 1, 9, 13 and 14 have been canceled. Allowable claims 2, 10, 16 and 18 have been rewritten in independent form, and claims 7, 12 and 15 have been amended to depend from allowable claims 2 and 10. Claims 2-8, 10-12 and 15-20 are presented for further examination.

The objection to the drawings is believed obviated by the cancellation of claims 9, 13 and 14.

The rejection of claims 16-19 under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, is believed overcome by the amendment of claims 16 and 18 to refer to "a connecting element" instead of "the connecting element".

The rejections of claims under 35 U.S.C. §§ 102 and 103 have been rendered moot by the foregoing amendments.

In view of the foregoing, the application is respectfully submitted to be in condition for allowance, and prompt, favorable action thereon is earnestly solicited.

If there are any questions regarding this amendment or the application in general, a telephone call to the undersigned at (202) 624-2845 would be appreciated since this should expedite the prosecution of the application for all concerned.

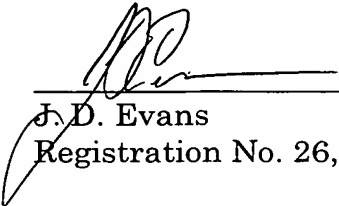
If necessary to effect a timely response, this paper should be considered as a petition for an Extension of Time sufficient to effect a timely response, and

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please charge any deficiency in fees or credit any overpayments to Deposit  
Account No. 05-1323 (Docket #037141.53293US).

Respectfully submitted,

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